The Shuttlecoque Sporting Club

The PURPOSE of the S.S.C. shall be

1. To call attention to, and ably champion, those aspects of sport that are either most ennobling or transcendent. We believe vigorously in sport as Provocation—that is, that it facilitates those instances when something inside of us resonates vibrantly with something outside. We aim to shout to the roof tops the names of Enthusiasm's greatest practitioners, who, by virtue of their acts of physical genius, serve both to celebrate human potential and produce within us curious moments of inner freedom.

We shall call this the principle of SPORT AS PROVOCATION.

2. To promote and legitimize the idea of man at play (*homo ludens*), as opposed to the traditional American-Protestant disposition towards joyless toil and labor (*homo faber*). We consider most important and satisfying those acts in which we partake wholly without obligation, by virtue of their own worth, and which allow for experimentation and mastery—a.k.a. *autotelic* activities. Spectatorship, in particular, we esteem not as mere diversion, but as a participatory activity with its own demands that, when understood sufficiently, might provide equal meaning to that which we typically call "work."

We shall call this the principle of PLAY.

3. To act as a retreat, meeting ground, and occasional symposium for those interested in The Good Life, by which term (i.e. The Good Life) we mean freedom from anxiety, emotional disturbance, and unnecessary exertions (a state known as *ataraxia*, in the Greek). And, while we do not endorse any one means of achieving this state, we founders do believe that a constant study of, and curiosity for, ethical philosophy—that is, The Art of Living Well—is imperative to its pursuit. Nor by this do we mean only a theoretical understanding of that philosophy, but a willingness to put into practice its most elegant precepts.

We shall call this the principle of ETHICAL LIVING.

4. To create, by virtue of a selective membership process, the ideal environment for adult camaraderie—especially that sort which produces animated conversation, a lively exchange of ideas, a generosity of spirit, and honest criticism. In particular, we honor the bond of fandom, which brings together those of us having been seduced by sport's penchant for Revelation, who wish to share amongst the equally devoted such stirring Provocations.

We shall call this the principle FRIENDSHIP.

5. Finally, to document and share amongst members such instances as illuminate the merit or further intensify the mystery of the first four principles. *Fides quaerens intellectum*, theologians call it: "Faith in search of understanding." For we who have borne witness to great Enthusiasm, who have been seized by such pleasure as sport provides, there exists also the desire to recognize such experiences, whether by analysis, narrative, or praise.

We shall call this the principle of FAITH IN SEARCH OF UNDERSTANDING.

To learn more, tune into the Shuttlecoque Sporting Hour on 1450AM, Sundays at 9:00PM, or point your internet browser to sportinghour.blogspot.com

THE NEW ENTHUSIAST

WEEK IN REVIEW

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE SHUTTLECOQUE SPORTING CLUB

10 JANUARY 2008

#5

ACTION PREVIEWS, RIP CITY AND OTHERWISE

IN WHICH THE AUTHORS PLAY A LITTLE OF THE OLD "HE SAID, HE SAID"

On Wednesday, January 16, the very successful Portland Trailblazers visit the even more successful Boston Celtics at Generic Corporate Sponsor Arena. Here, Shuttlecoque Co-Chairs Eamon ffitch and Carson Cistulli offer their regionally-biased, but incredibly readable, previews of said game.

EAMON FFITCH DOTH SUBMIT

According to legend—and Wikipedia—the magnanimous and livable Portland, Oregon received its name from pioneering shopkeeper Francis William Pettygrove after what was, in the opinion of this author, the most thrilling coin toss ever attempted in the entirety of modern civilization. Pettygrove won the flip, thus earning the privilege of naming the fledgling Western burg for his hometown; the fledgling Eastern hamlet Portland, Maine. Had Pettygrove lost the flip the plush and elegantly adorned headquarters of the Shuttlecoque Sporting Club would be located in *Boston, Oregon*, a town so heinously titled it streaks this regionalist writer's cheeks with tears.

The point of all this historical hither-nor-thither is to lay groundwork for the rivalry of these two towns and their respective NBA teams. More accurately, the purpose is to fluff up a bitterness from nothing to add to this impending bout a pinch of the rotten and sour without which we might simply enjoy what is surely to be a resplendent basketball game played between the inarguable Titans of a new era (the Boston Celtics) and the NBA's most exciting and surprising team (your Portland Trailblazers).

At press-time the Celtics are 29-4, a record only comparable to that of the Chicago Bulls in 1995-96. In that year the Bulls—led by Jordan, Pippen, Dennis Rodman, and coached by Phil "Shaolin" Jackson—won 72 games and the national title. It is not unlikely that the Celtics will recreate such a rare and exceptional record. They are a team without a flaw who outscore their opponents by an average of over 13 points per game (the Blazers average about +1) and make it look easy.

However, it is entirely unreasonable to assume that the Celtics will make it to the end of the season without losing another game; certainly they can't be that good. It is simply a matter of time before their loss column gains a fifth tally and it is also not entirely unreasonable to believe that the Trailblazers can make that mark. The Blazers—again, at press-time—are on an amazing run, winning 17 of their last 18 games after going 13-2 in December. They have developed a system for winning that the league at large has not learned to contend with, a combination of sheer athleticism, volatility and that run-ragged Sporting cliche 'heart'. On the 16th of this month the young Trailblazers will march into the Boston Garden and put themselves to the test; are they a true play-off team. Whatever the result, the process of finding it out will be no-doubt sensational.

CARSON CISTULLI DOTH REBUT

Eamon and I were recently considering—while gazing out the finely-crafted and impossibly ornate stained glass windows of the Shuttlecoque Sporting Club—we were considering what sort of obligation an emigre (like myself) has to his new city. We agreed, and we hope you do too, that there's nothing less attractive than hearing some new arrival laundry-listing the virtues of his native burg while living the good life in his adopted one. One is inclined, on such occasions, to ask the offending party why the hell—if he so loves Flagstaff, AZ or wherever—why the hell he doesn't just make his way back there.

No, the Transplant (as we'll call him) owes some manner of respect—*propers*, if you will—to his new, however impermanent hometown, which now employs him, feeds him, removes his waste (solid and biological), transports and holds his library books at easily-accessible neighborhood library branches, and protects him from all manner of rapes and pillaging.

At the same time, we have conceded—while absentmindedly fingering the tassled borders of the Club's dark green velvet throw pillows—we've conceded that, of all the allegiances a Transplant might retain to his old

EX PRE FACTO BETTING TIPS

IN WHICH THE AUTHORS GET TOO BIG FOR THEIR BRITCHES, PROBABLY

In Episode 11 of the Shuttlecoque Sporting Hour, Joel Strong established a new benchmark for radio firsts by submitting the first ever (so as we know) Ex Post Facto Betting Tips, in which he instructs the good listener on which teams he should have *wagered in the previous weekend's football games. Now, Joel Strong attempts the more traditional pre-game style of handicapping.*

Two notes on methodology. First, the numbers for our spread are based on a combination of football's Pythagorean Win Theorem (look it up!) and Joel Strong's Talent. Second, because the odds are always stacked in the sportsbook's favor, we do not advise betting on every game, but only those in which the spread reaches or surpasses a certain threshold.

GREEN BAY v SEATTLE
Bet on: Green Bay @ -3.5 or better, Seattle @ +9.5 or better

NEW ENGLAND v JACKSONVILLE
Bet on: New England @ -8 or better, Jacksonville @ +13 or better

INDIANAPOLIS v SAN DIEGO
Bet on: Indianapolis @ -6.5 or better, San Diego @ +9.5 or better

DALLAS v NEW YORK FOOTBALL GIANTS
Bet on: Dallas @ -8.5 or better, New York @ +11 or better

THE SHUTTLECOQUE

SPORTING HOUR
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[*continued from bottom left*]
ville, the allegiance to his city's sports teams is far and away the most tolerable. Why this is so I will almost definitely never have the energy to consider in depth, but *that* it is so is as obvious as the nose on Julius Caesar's face—a marble bust of which sits no more than three yards from me as I compose this *communique* at one of the Club's many, incredibly sturdy mahogany desks.

Having just flown in from Boston (see: arms, tired) and having endured years of mediocrity from the Celtics, I feel I'm somewhat entitled to cherrypick off their new-found success. After all, I did endure years of David Wesley and Ron Mercer and Kenny Anderson and Tony Battie posing as so-called "NBA Starters" on my hometown team. Why should it be that, in the very same year I voyage Westward in the proverbial covered wagon (see: actually my mom's Ford pickup), I should be prevented from cheering for a team that, for all intents and purposes, is one of the best ever?

On the other hand, there's the temptation of, and increasing familiarity with, these Trailblazers. The indomitable Brandon Roy. The very bouncy Travis Outlaw. Martell Webster and his tre bomb. James Jones and his equally fantastic tre bomb.

Plus, in some ways, the Blazers have succeeded where the Celtics of the last two or three years have failed; they've assembled a young, cost-controlled team capable of playing a high-energy, if sometimes naive, style of basketball. And while the C's have, at some level, *bought* their success with the signings of Kevin Garnett and Ray Allen, the Blazers' success is almost entirely attributable to players acquired by means of the draft, and, therefore, carries a distinct charm.

The point is, this game is forcing a hand I'm not sure I'm yet willing to play. It's asking of me a question I'm not necessarily prepared to answer: "Cistulli, upon whose bandwagon will you jump? This sexy, 29-4, best-team-ever kind of bandwagon, or this spritely, young, black-and-red kind of bandwagon?" And maybe I'm not emotionally ready for this type of decision, is what I'm trying to say.